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Message Text

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44
ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-20 FEA-02 INT-08

DRC-01 /149 W
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R 250700Z MAR 74
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6500
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 1478

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SA, BE
SUBJECT: BELGIAN CROWN PRINCE VISITS SAUDI ARABIA

SUMMARY: BELGIAN CROWN PRINCE ALBERT VISITED SAUDI ARABIA AT HEAD 42 MAN DELEGATION MARCH 15-22. IN COURSE OF VISIT HE MET WITH KING FAISAL AND TOP SAUDI OFFICIALS IN ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL FIELDS. HE PRESENTED DRAFT "FRAMEWORK" FOR BILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT BUT NO AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED. OIL WAS NOT DISCUSSED. BELGIAN AMABASSADOR CONSIDERS VISIT QUALIFIED SUCCESS. END SUMMARY.

1. CROWN PRINCE ALBERT OF BELGIUM ARRIVED IN SAUDI ARABIA EVENING OF MARCH 15 AT THE HEAD OF A 42-MEMBER
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DELEGATION (12 OFFICIAL, 30 BUSINESS). DELEGATION

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SPEND FIRST 5 DAYS IN RIYADH WERE CROWN PRINCE MET WITH KING FAISAL AND OTHERS OF TOP SAUDI LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR PRINCE FAHD, MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MOHAMMED AL-AWADI, MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCIAL AFFAIRS ABA AL-KHAIL, HEAD OF THE CENTRAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION HISHAM NAZER, MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS SHAIKH TAWFIQ, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES SHAIKH HASSAN MISHARI, HEAD OF THE NATIONAL GUARD PRINCE ABDULLA, AND VARIOUS OTHER OFFICIALS IN THE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL FIELDS AT THE DEPUTY MINISTER/DIRECTOR GENERAL LEVEL. LAST TWO DAYS SPENT IN JIDDA WHERE GROUP TOURED VARIOUS INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES INCLUDING REFINERY AND DESALINATION PLANT.

2. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR REGARDS VISIT AS QUALIFIED SUCCESS. HE CONSIDERS PRINCE ALBERT TO HAVE BEEN WELL QUALIFIED TO HEAD SUCH A DELEGATION: HIS ROYALTY ASSURED HIM GOOD ACCESS TO TOP LEADERSHIP AND, AS PRESIDENT BELGIAN TRADE OFFICE, HE WAS WELL GROUNDED IN SUBJECTS WHICH WERE DISCUSSED.

3. PRINCE ALBERT HAD BROUGHT WITH HIM THE "FRAMEWORK" FOR A BILATERAL AGREEMENT IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC COOP-ERATION. THIS DRAFT AGREEMENT WAS DISCUSSED WITH SAUDI OFFICIALS AND LEFT BEHIND FOR THEM TO STUDY IN THE HOPE THAT IT MIGHT BE FLESHED OUT AND SIGNED AT SOME FUTURE DATE. (IN RELAYING THIS INFORMATION TO THE AMBASSADOR, BELGIAN AMBASSADOR WAS DIFFIDENT AND SAID HE HOPED THAT THIS ACTION WOULD NOT BE TROUBLESOME TO THE USG).

4. BEFORE THE VISIT THE DECISION HAD BEEN MADE THAT OIL WOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED AND IT WAS NOT. IN VISIT TO BRUSSELS LAST DECEMBER SAUDI MINPET YAMANI HAD ASSURED GOB OF SUFFICIENT OIL SUPPLIES AND IT WAS THOUGHT THAT RAISING SUBJECT NOW WOULD SERVE NO PURPOSE AND MIGHT HARM ATMOSPHERE OF VISIT.

5. A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL PRO-
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JECTS WERE DISCUSSED--INCLUDING THE SEVEN YEAR-OLD PROPOSAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A 250-BED CIVILIAN HOSPITAL--BUT WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SEVERAL MINOR PROJECTS, NO AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED.

COMMENT: THE BELGIANS HAD THE EXAMPLE OF HIGH LEVEL FRENCH, BRITISH, DANISH AND ITALIAN DELEGATIONS WHICH PRECEDED THEM AND WE EXPECT THEY WERE REALISTIC ENOUGHT

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NOT EVEN TO HOPE TO THAVE A BILATERAL AGREEMENT SIGNED BYRING THE VISIT. WITH THEIR SIGHTS HAVING BEEN SET SOMEWHAT LOW FROM THE BEGINNING, THE BELGIANS ARE PROBABLY JUSTIFIED IN CONSIDERING THE MISSION A SUCCESS.
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